

Hemerocallis – Beauty for more than a Day

There are some flowering plants that just get on with it and then surprise you with a spectacular display of flowers that outshines everything else in the gardens. Hemerocallis, commonly known as day lilies are one such plant.

The name day lily, comes from the lily-like flowers and from the fact that each individual flowers lasts but a day. Don't be put off though, there is a continuous succession of flowers for 8 to 10 weeks in summer.

These plants are not true lilies, so don't get troubled by lily beetle at all.

Originally Day Lilies were yellow, or perhaps orangey coloured and flowered for quite a short time. Once gardeners got hold of them they discovered that they cross with each other readily and it is relatively easy to create new exciting colours and patterns in the flowers. Now every colour is available except black, a very pure white and a true blue. Most modern types are around 2ft / 60cm tall although some are half this height and some may have flower stems twice this height.

White Day Lilies are very desirable! None are pure white, but the best is **"White Temptation" (1)**: a strong grower that has the best colour of any with white petals and a pale yellow throat.



Reds are equally valuable in the garden and the large flowers of day lilies certainly sing out. My personal



favourites are the short **"Dominic" (2)** and the later flowering, taller "Stafford".

Some are sweetly perfumed like the purple **"Georgette Belden" (3)** and the yellow "Marion Vaughn".



Martin Blow,
SpecialPerennials

The more highly patterned day lily flowers are a joy to see as they open in the morning. **"Duke of Durham" (7)** is short with blazing orange flowers each with a deep maroon eye and the lilac and purple **"Protocol"** is one of the most striking day lilies is also recommended.

For lovers of pastel shades there are plenty to choose from. My personal favourites are the pink **"Janice Brown"** and **"Sweet Sugar Candy" (4)**.

You might not like spiders, but you're sure to be charmed by spider day lilies! These have long, narrow petals and very large flowers.



"Eggplant Escapade" (5) has 6in (15cm) wide flowers in all shades of purple. Also recommended is the red and yellow **"Marse Connell"**.

There are double flowered types and these typically need a sunny spot to perform well. **"Firecracker"** is one of



the best with intricately shaped flowers.

These are some of my favourites among our collection of over 150 varieties and there are just so many to choose from.

Growing these lovely plants couldn't be more simple. They are very adaptable, growing in moist or quite dry soils, in full sun or light shade, and they are hardy and robust.



For the best flowers do give them some water when they are in bud. I feed mine in spring and remove the dead heads before they set seed.

When the plants are in full flower I like to walk round the garden in the morning admiring the new flowers and picking off dead heads – although it's not necessary to do this.

The only pest that may affect them is gall midge which makes some of the buds swell and drop off. The best treatment is to pick off any buds that are swollen at their base as soon as



you see them and pop them in the refuse bin – not the compost bin. If any are missed pick them off as soon as you see them and don't let them drop to the ground.

Apart from this there is very little to do except enjoy the lovely display!

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